

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 NSC-10 RSR-01 /067 W

----- 093345

R 291607Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 630

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE STOCKHOLM 3078

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SW

SUBJECT: LAW AND ORDER IN SWEDISH ELECTION

REF: STOCKHOLM 3019

SUMMARY: THE HAPPY OUTCOME OF STOCKHOLM'S 5 1/2 DAY BANK SIEGE HAS THRUST THE LAW-AND-ORDER ISSUE TO THE FOREFRONT OF SWEDEN'S POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WITH UNCERTAIN EFFECT ON OUTCOME. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE OVER LAW-AND-ORDER, BUT PALME GETS THE CREDIT FOR A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. STOCKHOLM'S WELL-PUBLICIZED BANK SIEGE HAD A DRAMATIC CONCLUSION AUGUST 28, WITH THE BANK ROBBERS CAUGHT AND THE HOSTAGES FREED ON LIVE PRIME TIME TV. THE SIEGE (ALONG WITH KING'S ILLNESS) VIRTUALLY DROVE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OUT OF PUBLIC NOTICE. BUT IT DID HIGHLIGHT WHAT HAD BEEN A SECONDARY ELECTION ISSUE - LAW AND ORDER.

2. LAW-AND-ORDER HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN A POINT OF CON-  
TENTION BETWEEN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES,  
ESPECIALLY THE MODERATES. SOCDEMS TAKE POSITION THAT  
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CRIME IS CAUSED BY ILLS OF SOCIETY AND ONE SHOULD USE

AVAILABLE PUBLIC FUNDS TO CORRECT ILLS RATHER THAN FOR "REPRESSIVE MEASURES." BOURGEOIS PARTIES, POINTING TO RISING CRIME RATE, INSIST THAT, WHATEVER THE CAUSES, THERE IS EVIDENT NEED FOR MORE POLICE TO DEAL WITH SITUATION. UNDER BOURGEOIS PRESSURE (AND RISING PUBLIC DEMAND) SOCDEMS LAST WINTER APPOINTED A STUDY COMMISSION WHICH CONCLUDED 1680 NEW POLICE POSITIONS WERE NEEDED. GOVERNMENT RATHER RELUCTANTLY WENT ALONG WITH THE RECOMMENDATION AND ISSUE FADED FROM THE NATIONAL STAGE. THE BANK SIEGE ABRUPTLY REVIVED IT.

3. COUNTRY'S BIGGEST CIRCULATION PAPER, EXPRESSEN (LIBERAL) LED RENEWED CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT WITH AN EDITORIAL ON AUGUST 25: "THE EVENTS IN THE BANK ARE FRESH REMINDER OF FACT WE MUST EXPECT CRIME TO GROW INCREASINGLY SERIOUS AND RUTHLESS. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES GOVERNMENT'S PORTRACTED RESISTANCE TO PROPER REINFORCEMENTS FOR POLICE FORCE APPEARS EVEN MORE ABSURD THAN PREVIOUSLY." SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ARBETET REPLIED SAME DAY: "STOCKHOLM DRAMA WILL PROBABLY ACT AS BOOSTER TO PRESENT BOURGEOIS CAMPAIGN FOR LAW AND ORDER. THERE IS EVERY REASON TO BELIEVE THAT BOURGEOIS VICTORY WOULD RESULT IN A MORE INHUMAN AND BRUTAL SOCIETY."

4. PRIME MINISTER PALME HAS ALSO COME IN FOR SOME CRITICISM FOR PLAYING POLITICS WITH THE EVENT. FIVE MINUTES AFTER THE DENOUNCEMENT HE WAS IN FRONT OF THE BANK, SPEAKING TO UNDOUBTEDLY LARGEST TV AUDIENCE IN SWEDISH HISTORY. HIS LITTLE HOMILY THANKING THE POLICE AND CALLING FOR NATIONAL UNITY WAS THEATRICAL - PERHAPS TOO MUCH SO FOR MANY SWEDES.

COMMENT: SOCDEMS WHO HAVE DISCUSSED IT WITH US TEND TO BELIEVE THAT BANK EPISODE WORKED ON BALANCE AGAINST THEM BECAUSE: 1) THEIR ELECTION "STEAMROLLER" WAS VIRTUALLY HALTED AND 2) A REVIVED ISSUE LAW AND ORDER, HAS COME UP TO PUT THEM ON THE DEFENSIVE (THEY KNOW A MAJORITY OF SWEDES FAVOR OF MORE EFFECTIVE ANTI-CRIME MEASURES). THESE NEGATIVES WERE AT LEAST PARTIALLY OFFSET BY FACT SIEGE ENDED HAPPILY AND GOVERNMENT CAN ACCEPT KUDOS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEREON. MOREOVER, PALME GOT REPEATED NATIONWIDE TV AND PRESS EXPOSURE WHILE HIS RIVALS VIRTUALLY WRIJFRH# FROM PUBLIC EYE FOR FIVE CRITICAL DAYS.

OLSEN

NOTE BY OC/T: (#)AS RECEIVED.

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